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1947

PALESTINE

19 AUG 1947

Registry Number

VE 7610/7610/31

FROM

Trefford

No.

Done to

Dated

Colonial Office

Received in Registry

H. M. Bealey

15 Aug 1947

Establishment of Jewish Island Rehabilitation Center

I read Rabbi Schoenfeld's proposition of buying an island in the Aegean as the solution for Jewish B.P.s could be a very happy permanent settlement alternative to the U.S.A.

Last Paper

(Minutes.)

References

I agree with Mr. Trefford Smith's third paragraph, but I don't think a Greek island is a very happy alternative.

(Print)

Southern Dept. for any obs.

H. M. Bealey 19/8

(How disposed of)

By Mr. Trefford Smith & O. from H. M. Bealey Dept. etc

61947

(Action completed)

(Index)

[Signature]

[Signature]

Next Paper

There are the following objections:

- (i) An island in the Aegean would be ideal for the purpose of illicit Jewish immigration, not only by geographical situation, but also by the fact that in this respect the Greek administration and police have shown themselves corrupt or incompetent, and Greek caique owners and ~~traders~~ traders clever and unscrupulous.
- (ii) Greece is struggling with civil war, political and financial instability and with grave difficulties as to transport and food supplies. Must anything more be added to her burden? It is to our advantage that one of the weakest countries in the world, where we are involved, should be saddled with the inevitable administrative and other problems?
- (iii) The Greeks are extremely suspicious of all foreigners, especially if they come from central European countries now within the Soviet sphere of influence. They have no particular sympathy for the Jews and even

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the foundation of detention camps for Jews in Cyprus has caused bad feeling in Greece. It is most unlikely at any rate that they would sell, or allow the private sale of an island to be entirely run by foreigners.

(iv) Uninhabited Greek islands are barren and waterless; only a very few small islands are privately-owned. No Greek Government would be likely to allow the removal of Greeks from an island to make room for Jews.

In conclusion, I do not think there is the slightest likelihood of the Greek State consenting to negotiate, or allowing private individuals to negotiate, the cession of a Greek island for this purpose. In addition to this, there will seem to be serious objections from the British point of view, for the reasons outlined in paragraphs (i) and (ii) above.

D. Balfour

21st August, 1947.

A. Wilson
24/8

I do not think that the point made in Mr. Balfour's para. (ii) is relevant. It seems clear from Mr. Trafford Smith's further paragraphs that the intention is that this island should be entirely Jewish and, presumably, self-administering. Far from adding to the burden of the Greek Govt., it would probably be the most well-run portion of Greek territory.

I submit draft letter to Mr. Trafford Smith accordingly.

I don't agree; but draft can issue subject to Secretary's concurrence
23 Aug 27

Huber
C. E. CABLE
27/8

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8th Sept
~~29 Aug.~~

Delist.

Mr. Trafford Smith
C.O.

from
Mr. ~~Beeley~~
Beeley

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Soutter/Sept.
Frit.
to with 5/27
JB Aug 27

My dear Trafford,

Please refer to
~~7 Beeley's absence~~

~~affirming~~ to your letter
of the 15th August about
Mr. Schonfeld's suggestion that
a Greek island in the Aegean
or the Dodecanese should be
purchased as a Jewish Rehabilitation
centre for Jewish D.P.s.

2. This suggestion appears
to us to be open to several
objections:

(a) The presence of Jewish
D.P.s on an island in the
Aegean would greatly facilitate
the task of the organisers of
Jewish illegal immigration.

(b) The Greeks are suspicious
of all foreigners and, in particular,
of those coming from Central
Europe. They have no great
sympathy for ^{displaced} Jews and resent
their presence in Cyprus. It seems
/most

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most unlikely that the Greek Govt. would sell or permit the sale of an island to be now entirely by foreigners.

(c) Only a very few small islands have privately owned, while those that have uninhabited are barren and waterless. No Greek Govt. would be likely to allow the removal of Greeks to make room for Jews.

3. Briefly, therefore,
~~in conclusion~~ it is most unlikely that the Greek Govt. would agree to this proposal. So long as we remain in Palestine, ~~moreover~~ moreover, it would be against our interests to ~~press the idea~~ ^{offer support} ~~and particularly those~~ it, for the reasons given in para. 2 (a) above.

JB. Sept. 3

(d). Such an island would inevitably become an apple of discord among Greek politicians, thereby adding to the general state of unrest and disunity and detracting from the value of the economic, political & security measures which the Americans & ourselves are trying to take to prevent Greece from slipping behind the Iron Curtain.

insert

Yours ever,

(Sgd.) Harold Beeby

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FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

8th September, 1947.

(E 7610/7610/51)

My dear Trafford,

Please refer to your letter of the 15th August about Dr. Schonfeld's suggestion that a Greek island in the Aegean or the Dodecanese should be purchased as a Jewish Rehabilitation Centre for Jewish displaced persons.

2. This suggestion appears to us to be open to several objections:-

(a) The presence of Jewish displaced persons on an island in the Aegean would greatly facilitate the task of the organizers of Jewish illegal immigration.

(b) The Greeks are suspicious of all foreigners and, in particular, of those coming from Central Europe. They have no great sympathy for displaced Jews and resent their presence in Cyprus. It seems most unlikely that the Greek Government would sell or permit the sale of an island to be run entirely by foreigners.

(c) Only a very few small islands are privately owned, while those that are uninhabited are barren and waterless. No Greek Government would be likely to allow the removal of Greeks to make room for Jews.

(d)/

Trafford Smith, Esq.,
Colonial Office.

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End

(d) Such an island would inevitably become an apple of discord among Greek politicians, thereby adding to the general state of unsettledness in Greece and detracting from the value of the economic, political and security measures which the Americans and ourselves are trying to take to prevent Greece from slipping behind the Iron Curtain.

3. Briefly, therefore, it is most unlikely that the Greek Government would agree to this proposal. So long as we remain in Palestine, moreover, it would be against our interests to support it for the reasons given, and particularly those in paragraph 2 (a) above.

Yours ever,

(Sgd.) Harold Beeley

(H. Beeley)

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